(b) whether it is a fact that Coast Guard has not held any such meetings between September 1, 2008 and January 31, 2009;

(c) the steps proposed to ensure that Coast Guard is accessible for meetings with fishermen; and

(d) the reasons for Coast Guard not calling mandatory consultative meetings with fishermen and small entrepreneurs in fishery sector?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) Coast Guard undertakes community interaction programme regularly by adopting fishing villages and provide basic safety training to the fishermen. The community interaction programme is instituted in every Coastal State and Union territory every quarter. The Coast Guard has carried out 43 community interaction meetings with the fishermen along the coast between 1st September, 2008 to 31st January, 2009. The community interaction programme being undertaken by Coast Guard is a voluntary effort. Coast Guard acts as an enforcement agency of the Government to check that deep sea fishing vessels comply with various requirements and conditions set by Ministry of Agriculture.

Talks with Somali pirates to free Indian hostages

†896. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the relatives of Indian engineer and other personnel taken hostage by Somali pirates on 7th January, 2009, have requested Indian authorities to hold talks with the Somali Government for release of hostages; and

(b) if so, efforts made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Induction of cadets from NCC pool into Indian armed forces

897. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been actively considering to induct more cadets from the NCC pool into the officer cadres of the armed forces;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the strength of the NCC cadets would be increased and deployed at various important locations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) The Government has already earmarked vacancies in officer cadres of the Armed Forces for induction of National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets who volunteer and meet the requisite standards.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.